The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13.

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Katy's Guess.

With twelve white eggs in a downy nest
The old hen sits in a box in the shed:
And the children, yesterday, stood and guessed
Of the hopes that hid in her speckled breast,
Of the dreams that danced through her red-crowned head

"She thinks," said the labor-saving Ned,
"Of a land where weasels are all asleep,
Where the hawks are blind and the dogs are dead,
Where are heaps of corn as high as the shed,
And plenty of earthworms for her to eat"

"She remembers the county Fair," says Bess,
"And the prize she took at Hampton town."
"No no she don't," cries James the less,
"She dreams of little ducks, I guess;
She is wondering yet why they didn't drown."

And what say you little curly-pate?
I see a thought in your merry eye,
"She finks," says the bright-haired baby, Kate,
As she lifts the latch of the garden gate,
"Vere'll be tickens to skatch for by-and-by."

Three cheers for the wisdom of three-years-old;
Who told you the secret, little pet,
That love is better than ease or gold,
That labor for love pays a thousand fold?
"Oo fink it oorself"? Well, don't forget.—*Selected.*

Love.

The love that will soonest decay,
The love that is surest to die,
The love that will soon fly away,
Is the love
That is told by a sigh.

The love that is surest to last,
The love that a woman's heart needs,
The love that will be kept fast,
Is the love
That is spoken in deeds.

We know no other words except "Our Father,"
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them, with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both in his right hand, which is strong.

For the Myrtle.

Robby's Dream.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

II.

When the boys had been in the water as long as they liked to stay, Willie said:

"Tell me more about that blind man who sees through his face."

"What do you want to know?"

"Why, anything that you know about him, and have not told me."

"Well, I know that he has written a book on Blindness and the Blind."

"What, a blind man write a book?"

"Yes, that is not very astonishing. A good many blind people have written books. But this seems to me to be a very extraordinary book. It tells a good many things that have not been told before."

"What is the man's name?"

"It is Levy. 'He is Director of the Association for promoting the welfare of the Blind,' and must be a very smart man."

"I should think so, if he can see through his face. I suppose he walks about alone, the same as any man."

"Oh yes, certainly. He says that when he is walking on a street, he can distinguish shops from private houses, and even point out the doors and windows, and this whether they be shut or open. He can tell a solitary object from a continuous fence. Can tell whether a fence is

close, or composed of open rails, and whether it is a wooden fence or a brick or stone wall. Or if the lower part is stone and the upper part rails, he will tell that."

"It must be that he knows this by hearing." Robby laughed at this. And said:

"Do you think you could hear a stone wall?"

"No I could not. But any one who had educated ears, might distinguish between the way the sound of their voice struck a solid or open fence."

"I don't know but they could. But Mr. Levy doesn't get his knowledge with his ears. He says particularly that the sense of hearing, has nothing to do with it. When snow is on the ground, objects are more distinct, though he cannot hear a footfall."

"Well, it is very wonderful. It would almost pay to be blind if one could do such very wonderful things."

"Oh no Willie, don't deceive yourself by thinking that anything could make up for the loss of eyesight. I should rather lose every other sense than that."

The boys had been walking homeward, as they were talking, and now they seemed to have got over the ground much faster than when they went down to the river.

Willie proposed that they should go hunting, but Robby was not in the mood to go.

They tried ball playing but a very little trial of it tired Robby.

Then he tried his books again, but was no better pleased with that.

The day wore away slowly to him, and he wished the night would come that he might go to sleep and forget himself.

Bed time came at last, and the boys went to their chamber.

Willie went to sleep almost as soon as he lay down, but Robby was wakeful, and tossed about on his bed a long time before he got any rest.

At last—toward midnight, he slept. But the sleep was not sweet and refreshing, such as Willie was enjoying.

In his dream he seemed to be in a prison. The room was very small, without either door or window, save one small opening in the roof. Over this was a sliding door, which it seemed to him was shutting gradually.

So terrible was the thought, that he felt his very blood chill. If the door continued to slide down, he would be left without light or air, and must certainly die when there was no longer any air for him to breathe.

Every now and then, a man came to the opening and looked down upon him.

He did not pity him, nor seem willing to try to help him.

Robby begged with all the energy of one dying.

"Oh have mercy on me, I pray you," he cried, as the jailer looked down upon him.

"Have mercy, and help me out of this dreadful place."

"No," said the jailer, "You seem to think that holes in the ground are good places for rabbits to be shut in. We'll try, and see if they are not just as good for boys."

"But I have never made a hole in the ground to put a rabbit in," pleaded Robby.

"It makes no difference who made the hole," said the jailer.

"But I never put a rabbit into a hole after he had made it," said Robby.

It makes no difference" said the jailer. "who does the putting into the holes."

"Oh pray be merciful," cries Robby "and help me out"

"No indeed!" said the jailer, "Mercy should be shown to the merciful. What claim have you on my mercy?"

"Well, do, do not let that door slide down entirely over the opening. I shall be stifled for want of air," said Robby.

"Can you not breathe as well as a rabbit, without air"? the jailer asked.

"Oh, pray forgive me for doing so wicked a thing as shutting the door of the rabbit's house. I will never do so again if I can but be forgiven this time."

"I don't know how I am to be sure that you will never do so again," said the jailer.

"I promise you solemnly, that I will not," said Robby.

"But I have known boy's promises broken so often that I have no faith in them at all," said the jailer.

"Only try me," said Robby, "try me once, and if I am known to do wickedly by an animal again, I will not complain of any punishment you may put upon me."

"You have no reason to complain now," said the jailer, "The once that you are being smothered, is no more than the once that the poor rabbit suffered."

Slowly, but surely came down that fatal door.

Robby watched it with an agony which seemed the agony of death.

"Oh will no one help me?" he cried. "Is there not in heaven or earth a friend who will save me?

There came no answer to his cry, but the door moved slowly on. The place became darker and darker, and Robby saw that in a moment more he should be shut in forever, away from the possibility of help.

Slowly, slowly, comes the door, till from a certain point it falls with a crash.

Then Robby screams. A shrill piercing shriek which woke every person in the house.

It was such a cry as might come from the lips of one being murdered. Those who heard it will not soon forget it.

Willie was frightened almost to death, and the Uncle and Aunt and all the servants who came running from every quarter of the house, were not much less so.

When Robby was fairly awake, he told his dream, and they all understood what was the cause of his screaming so fearfully.

But only Willie knew what was the cause of the dream. He did not tell his Uncle and Aunt. For he thought that if it had been he, who had done so wicked an act, he should wish to have the secret kept.

After all was quiet once more in the house, Robby said:

"Oh, Willie! I would give anything if I could undo the wrong I did this morning. It haunts me so, that I dare not go to sleep again.

"The wrong is undone," said Willie. "I went up and rolled away the stone from the door of the rabbit's house, immediately after dinner."

"Oh, I am so thankful," said Robby. "You do not think that he was dead do you?"

"No, there was plenty of room for him to breathe. But he would soon have died, of starvation if he had not been liberated."

"I cannot be glad enough that you liberated him" said Robby, "and now so long as I live, I will never do so cruel an act again. *E. M. B.*

IT is kind words and bright smiles that make people happy often. They are worth more, sometimes than great speech or rich gifts, and any little boy or girl can give them.

AVOID what is innocent when it will be the occasion of another's sin.

A Poor Girl's Hair.

On Thursday of last week a young and poorly clad girl entered a barber's shop in Vienna, and told the proprietor that he must "buy her head." The friseur examined her long, glossy, chestnut locks, and began to bargain. He could give her eight gulden, and no more. Hair was plentiful this year, the price had fallen, there was less demand, and other phrases of the kind. The little maiden's eyes filled with tears, and she hesitated a moment while threading her fingers through her chestnut locks. She finally threw herself into a chair, and said:

"In God's name, take it quickly!"

The barber, satisfied with his bargain, was about to clinch it with his shears, when a gentleman who sat half-shaved, looking on, told him to stop.

"My child," he said, "why do you sell your beautiful hair?"

"My mother has been nearly five months ill. I can not work enough to support us; everything has been sold or pawned, and there is not a penny in the house."

"No, no, my child if that is the case, I will buy your hair, and will give you 100 gulden for it."

He gave the poor girl the note, the sight of which dried her tears, and took up the barber's shears. Taking the locks in his hand, he took the longest hair, cut it off, and put it carefully in his pocket-book, thus paying 100 florins for a single hair. He took the poor girl's address, in case he should want to buy another at the same rate. He is only designated as the chief of a great industrial enterprise within the city.

The Moss.

A little boy, who was one day walking in the fields with his father, asked him how it was that there was so much more moss on one side of the trees than on the other.

"My boy," replied the father, "just as the good God gives a fleece to the sheep to keep it warm and snug during the cold weather, so He puts this green coat on the trees to protect them during the winter, and He is so good that He takes care to make it grow thickest on the side where the north wind blows; trees have no parents to take care of them, so God clothes them for all seasons.

For the Myrtle.

River Nests.

Down on the river's breast,
Where reeds and lilies bloom,
The birds have found their joy
In building them a home.

No rude intruder's hand
Can reach the pretty nest
Moored safely as it lies
Upon the river's breast.

Blow softly summer gales,
Flow gently ebbing tide.
Disturb not heart's that rest
Down by the river side

For mother's love is there,
The holiest thing on earth—
So touch not, wind or tide,
The mysteries of birth.

E. *M. B.*

For the Myrtle.

Beginning Wrong.

Come, come, it is time you were up," says Aunt Clara, calling to Simon from the foot of the staircase.

"Yes ma'am," Simon replied in a half-awake voice, and turning on his pillow dropped off to sleep once more.

Ten minutes later Aunt Clara's voice was heard again in the lower hall:

"Are you up Simon?"

"Not yet" says Simon, stirring uneasily on his pillow.

"Well come right away. The breakfast is nearly ready, and the morning chores none of them started."

"Yes ma'am," Simon again replies, sleepily.

Ten minutes later, again the sharp voice from the foot of the stairs:

"Simon are you up?"

This time the boy got his eyes a little wider open, and he replied.

"I am coming in a minute, Aunty.

"Minute?" Aunt Clara echoed. "I'll be the one that'll be coming in a minute, if you don't appear here soon, and get about your morning's work."

This threat started Simon a little, for he knew, by past experience, that Aunt Clara had a way of coming, accompanied by a stick, which was not always an agreeable visitor. Yet he was very sleepy, and when once the sound of the threatening voice had died away, he forgot the terror that it had suggested, and dropped asleep again as soundly as if he had never been roused.

Five minutes more passed, and Aunt Clara's patience was worn out. The cow was waiting to be milked, the horse to be watered, the hens to be fed, and there was the lazy boy whose business it was to do all this before breakfast, lying in his bed asleep.

It was so long a time since Aunt Clara was a child that she had forgotten how sleepy she used to be in the mornings then, and she had very little sympathy, and less patience, with children.

Taking a bowl full of ice-cold water, she ran

up the staircase, and dashed it into the face of the sleeping boy.

"There, take that," said she, "I'll teach you to sleep on in this way, after I have called you a half dozen times."

Simon sprang to his feet, and doubled his fist with rage.

"Who dared throw water on me that way?"

"I dared," says Aunt Clara, defiantly, "and I will do it again, if you don't stir yourself when I call you in the morning."

"I'll—"

"None of your threats," says Aunt Clara. "You've tried me enough for one morning."

As she said this, she disappeared down the stairway, leaving the angry boy trying to wipe off the water, and muttering to himself.

"I'll throw her in the cistern when I get big enough!"

Five minutes later he crept down stairs, and seizing up the pail, went with a great clatter out to his morning chores. The breakfast had been ready, and waiting some time, before he came in again, and Aunt Clara was cross about that, so that the half-hour at table was a most uncomfortable one to them both. When Simon was done eating, and had combed his hair, and made himself tidy for school, it was fifteen minutes of nine, and the school house was twenty minutes walk from his Aunt's house. Seeing that he would be late unless he ran, he threw down his books, and said:

"I won't go to school this morning."

"Yes you will," says Aunt Clara, and immediately she takes her stick down from the chimney corner, and flourishes it in a way to make Simon understand what will come next if he doesn't move on.

Picking up his books he goes sulkily along the path toward the school-house. He might have reached there in time, by running, but he is feeling cross and he will not run. So he has to be punished again after he gets to school, for being tardy, and the whole day goes wrong with him, because he began wrong in the morning.

If he does not mend his ways he will go on thus unhappily to the end of his life, being punished all the way through, and meeting death at last with a frown. *E. M. B.*

THE vanity of loving fine clothes and new fashions, and valuing ourselves by them, is one of the most childish pieces of folly that can be.

Learning to Pray.

KNEELING, fair in the twilight gray,
A beautiful child was trying to pray;
His cheek on his mother's knee,
His bare little feet half-hidden,
His smile still coming unbidden,
And his heart brimful of glee.

"I want to laugh. Is it naughty? Say.
O mamma! I've had such fun to-day,
I hardly can say my prayers.
I don't feel just like praying;
I want to be out-doors playing,
And run, all undressed, down stairs.

"I can see the flowers in the garden bed,
Shining so pretty, and sweet, and red;
And Sammy is swinging. I guess.
Oh! everything is so fine out there,
I want to put it all in the prayer.
(Do you mean I can do it by 'Yes'?)

"When I say, 'Now I lay me'—word for word—
It seems to me as if nobody heard.
Would 'Thank you, dear God,' be right?
He gave me my mammy,
And papa, and Sammy—
O mamma! you nodded I might."

Clasping his hands, and hiding his face,
Unconsciously yearning for help and grace,
The little one now began.
His mother's nod and sanction sweet,
Had led him close to his dear Lord's feet.
And his words like music ran:

"Thank you for making this home so nice,
The flowers, and folks, and my two white mice.
(I wish I could keep right on.)
I thank you, too, for every day—
Only I'm most too glad to pray.
Dear God, I think I am done.

"Now, mamma, rock me—just a minute—
"And sing the hymn with 'darling' in it.
I wish I *could* say my prayers!
When I get big I know I can.
Oh! won't it be nice to be a man,
And stay all night down stairs!"

The mother, singing, clasped him tight,
Kissing and cooing her fond "Good-night,"
And treasured his every word.
For well she knew that the artless joy
And love of her precious, innocent boy,
Were a prayer that her Lord had heard.

Indwelling.

"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii: 20.

IN unto me: O Christ! Divine One, come!
I'll open wide the door. Make me thy temple home.
Cleanse thou each hidden chamber of my soul;
Cure secret sickness; make me perfect—whole.
Cast out—to stay cast out—all love of sin;
Adorn, with thine own hand, the dwelling-place within,
Let me thy presence feel. Mine eyes thy glory see;
My guest, abiding guest, oh! wilt thou be?
Spread thou the table; let me sup with thee—
Come unto me,
Oh! come to me.

"Great Guide Book"

FOR WINTER CONCERTS.

Frank. Ah G orge my brother, to what reason may I assign this happy meeting?

George. I have been wandering in the cold wintry winds of this life, enduring with sorrow its frosts, not knowing where to turn, or whither to direct my footsteps to find shelter. I am come Frank, hoping you may be able to direct me to a haven of rest and shelter.

Frank. O, George! more than happy am I to meet you, and the pleasure increases as I learn the reason of your presence with us. Be seated while we hear from our schoolmates, and together we will study the "Great Guide Book" of our lives, hoping to find the true way out from the chilling blasts of the winter of life to the sunny shore of eternal happiness. O here comes Hattie and Grace.

Hattie. Oh dear! I have been chilled, almost frozen by these wintry winds. Indeed, I am almost out of patience that we must endure so many cold and cheerless days.

George. And so am I. It is now winter, dead winter. Desolation and silence reign in the fields, no singing of birds is heard, no humming of insects. The streams murmur no longer, they are locked up with frost. The trees lift their naked boughs like withered arms into the bleak sky, the sap no longer rises in their veins. The flowers and the sweet-smelling herbs are decayed to their roots. The sun himself looks cold and cheerless, He gives only sufficient light to show the universal desolation.

Grace. Why do you thus complain? have you not read in your Bible that "God has set the borders of the earth and hath made both summer and winter," and again, "that he hath not left himself without witness in that he has done good and given us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons," filling our hearts with joy and gladness?

Frank. Yes, the cold wintry winds, the snow and frosts, the cares and anxities of this life, are all sent of God to teach us to loosen our grasp upon things of this world and to draw us near to him. He is the way the truth and the light, through Him we may expect to find shelter and happiness.

Grace. But we are to hear more of winter, of its benefits and of the mighty power that moves the winds. Here are Dora and Oritha, can you tell us something cheering about winter.

Dora. I have read somewhere in the Bible that the hand of God is in it all. "He saith to the snow be thou upon the earth, likewise to the small rain and the great rain, by the breath of God the frost is given, he giveth snow like wool, he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes, he casteth forth his ice like morsels. Who can stand before his cold?"

Oritha. Have you entered into the treasures of the snow? or seen the beauties of the frost? Winter comes upon us like a blight, it is true, but it brings its goal It changes the whole course of nature, and brings desolation and death to the beautiful growth of the soil, but it is all for good. God has ordained it. Winter is the night of the earth and the snow its blanket, under which it sleeps until refreshed, it shall awake in spring time ready to bring new life and abundance for man and beast.

Enter Carrie and Lillie. All sing "The Seasons" from "Sabbaths Songs," page 122.

Carrie. But winter has yet brighter scenes. He boasts of splendors beyond what gorgeous summer knows, or autumn with its many fruits, and woods all flushed with myriad hues. Come where the rain has glazed the snow, and clothed the trees with ice, while the February sun pours into the bowers a flood of light. Come, the smooth snow surface will hold you, and the broad arching woods welcome your entering. Look, the massive trunks are encased in pure crystal, each light-spray nodding in the breath of heaven, is studded with trembling water drops that glimmer with a golden light. Yes, you might deem the spot a paradise where gems grow, and diamonds put forth radiant rods, and bud with amethyst and gold. Do not despair, God's splendor is seen in winter, and his all-powerful hand preserves us still, and affords us food and raiment.

Lillie. And one more promise I bring, for God hath said "That while the earth remaineth cold and heat, summer and winter shall not cease." And though the days be chill and the months long and wearisome, the spring will return with a fresher boon. God will remember the world. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear, though the earth should be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

George. Ah, now I recall the beautiful words, and I see the light and the way. "The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. This God is our God, he will be our guide even unto death."

Frank. There is little need that I should tell you more of the goodness of God, every field is like an open book, every flower has a lesson upon its leaves, every murmuring brook has a tongue and a voice is in the rustling wind. All tell of their Master and proclaim the infinite goodness of God.

Enter Lillie and Alice. We bring our wreathes of evergreen plucked from the hardy cedar and pine, whose freshness and beauty the wintry snows have only brightened, and we crown anew the cross of hope, asking with hopeful, prayerful hearts that our young feet may walk the spotless path our loving Saviour trod, and that we in health and happiness may step off from the snows of this cold winter, to greet the merry birds of spring.

Sing "Winter," from "Sabbath Songs", page 126.

ARRANGEMENTS. Let the church be tastefully decorated with evergreen. Place a large cross before the altar let it also be hung with evergreen. Place a chair each side of the cross in which Frank and George will be seated part of the time. Let the others remain standing. When little Lillie and Alice enter they step to the foot of the cross and at the proper time hang their wreaths upon either arm of the cross, and then turn to the audience, assuming an attitude of prayer. Conclude as above, asking, etc.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

— The fortieth anniversary of the First Universalist Sunday School, Cambridge, was held recently. Mr. Robert Bacon, the Superintendent, made his report. The number of scholars and teachers belonging to the school, the last Sunday of 1873 was 323; the number the last Sunday of 1874 was 332. The average attendance has been 240, the largest at any one day 306, the smallest 128. The best average attendance of any class has been that of Mr. George Steadman's—95 per cent. Forty-one sessions of the school have been held during the year. There is a library of 899 volumes connected with it, 160 of which are for the teachers. The treasurer reported the receipts of the year to have been 327 03, the expenses $127.72.

NEW JERSEY.

— The Sunday School of the First Universalist church in Jersey City, has nearly doubled its numbers since last April, and is in a very flourishing condtion.

Doing for the World.

MATTHEW xxv. 40.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

On the Sunday following the one of which we told you last week—Andrew said to his little brother as soon as he was awake in the morning:

"Jimmy you will go to church with me to-day, will you not?"

"Oh no." says Jimmy, "you know that I don't love to go to church. I never can understand what the minister says."

"But don't you remember," says Andrew, "I told you that he preached so plain last Sunday that you couldn't help understanding him."

"Well, I don't believe that would happen again. He talked about us, and what we should do, last Sunday, but he will be sure to preach about Melchidek or some of those hard old ones that I can't understand to-day,"

"It couldn't be Melchidek," said Andrew laughing. "There never was such a man as that."

"I know there was," says Jimmy for I heard the minister preach about him the last time I went to meeting."

"No, no, that was Melchizedek."

"Well that's worse yet. Think of a little boy like me trying to understand about him."

"Why that is a beautiful word, Jimmy. It means 'King of Peace' I am sure we ought all to love to hear about him."

"There are a great many things that I ought to do, and don't do," said Jimmy.

"Well, come to meeting with me to-day, and you surely will not hear about Melchizedek for our minister told us last Sunday, what he was going to preach about to-day."

"What was it?"

"Doing good to the world."

"Oh how could you ask me to go to hear that sermon, I am too little to do good to this great world.'

"Come and see," said Andrew. "You thought last week that you were too little to do good to your neighbor, but I told you that he taught us how the least of us could do good, as well as the greatest."

"Well I will let you tell me again to-day. I would a great deal rather have a sermon from you, than from the minister, so you go to church, and bring the sermon home and preach it to me."

As Andrew could not persuade Jimmy to go to church, he was obliged to go without him. At noon he came into the house with a bound, saying:

"There Jimmy, I told you so. You could have understood all the sermon if you had gone with me this morning."

"I know better." says Jimmy. "The world is too big. Little chaps like me never could do for it. We couldn't reach so far."

"Did you never throw a pebble into the lake Jimmy, and see the little circles widen, and widen that it made on the water?"

"Yes many a time, and I've wondered what became of them, for they go, and go, away out as far as I can see."

"Well Jimmy, they never stop going till they touch the other shore. The minister says these pebbles are just like our little deeds. We are to save the world, by every one dropping in our pebble of goodness, and the waves started, will touch the farthest shore of the world."

"I don't see how, do you Andrew? The world isn't like a lake. It is a great big hard world, and I think nothing runs over it very fast All deeds get lost pretty soon after they are dropped into the world."

"Well, let's see about that. Our Saviour lived 1800 years ago, and the good deeds he did are talked about yet, and we are all trying to do like them."

"Oh yes. But he was so very much greater than anybody else, that what he did is remembered. No other persons good deeds would have been talked of so long."

"Why yes Jimmy, we still talk of what Matthew and James and Peter and John and Paul did."

Yes but they were great ones too.

"Well there was the poor woman who anointed Christ's head—he said that 'wheresoever the Gospel was preached in the whole world this should be told of her."

"I know, but it seems to me that it was because she did this for Christ, and he was so great"

"Well Jimmy, every least good deed we do, is done for Christ. He said 'whatsoever ye have done for one of these least my brethren, ye have done it unto me," and all the world is full of these, his brethren. We can be doing for him all the time if we will. I am going to try."

"I don't believe you'll be remembered 1800 years if you try ever so hard.

"It won't make any difference whether I am remembered or not, if the good I do, helps the world It is that we ought to try for. I shall always think of the sermon I have heard to-day, and try to make a life time of little good deeds, that the world may be a little farther on in goodness when I go out, than when I came into it."

Letter Puzzle.

Nine letters have I in all,
My one, two, three, and six and four
In Bethany
You'll always see;
In age you'll find
My seven, eight, nine,
And many places more.
I was a village small.

Little Sower.

Answer to Enigma No. 5.

FEB 6. Children obey your parents.

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